



# 多伦多唐人街社区土地信托 Toronto Chinatown Land Trust

222 Spadina Avenue,  
Chinatown Centre,  
Toronto

29 March 2026

Dear Mayor Chow, Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council and City Clerk,

Our names are Kai Wong and Sara Constant, and we are Co-Chairs of the community-elected Board of Directors of the Toronto Chinatown Land Trust (TCLT). We are a community-controlled effort to build an inclusive, culturally competent, and ever-evolving Chinatown in Toronto.

We are writing regarding agenda item **TE31.20: Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative – Proposals Report**, coming to Toronto and East York Community Council on April 1, 2026.

In our opinion, the current draft of the Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Study being presented to council **does not adequately address the vision for Chinatown that our communities have been advocating for.**

The Toronto Chinatown Land Trust works to turn property into Land. We acquire, develop and steward land, in perpetuity, for community needs and benefit. Our efforts work towards democratically controlled and deeply affordable housing that is culturally competent and responsive to the needs of low-income, racialized, multilingual residents and workers of Chinatown. We steward and support the evolution of Chinatown's long history of traditional mutual aid societies, benevolent associations and other existing culturally responsive support networks. As part of this ecosystem, we aim to re-build the relational infrastructure that anchors our community's sense of belonging and reciprocal responsibility to the Indigenous knowledge keepers and neighbours we live amongst.

Chinatown is a neighbourhood borne from decades of resilience against legislated racism and systemic discrimination. Historically, the City of Toronto has never adopted a plan or policy that explicitly names Chinatown until now, with the notable exception of the expropriation plan that displaced Toronto's original Chinatown in the 1960s. This vulnerability and lack of protective policy continues to shape the neighbourhood today, and Toronto has a responsibility to address and repair the harms of this displacement.

**Without concrete policy protections, countless businesses, associations and community spaces in Chinatown of historical and cultural significance are at risk of loss and erasure.** Vulnerable Chinese elders are at risk of displacement from the only neighborhood that feels culturally,



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linguistically and psychologically safe to call home. Small-scale landlords who hold the majority of affordable housing stock in the neighborhood have nowhere to turn to when dealing with the overwhelming challenges of building codes, bylaws and permits that are not linguistically accessible.

From the outside eye, city planning processes seem completely silo-ed, inefficient and uncoordinated.

The city's Cultural Districts program, heritage planning, the development of commercial land trusts and other Affordable Retail initiatives, and this current West Chinatown planning study all appear as separate initiatives from different city divisions—with no clear collaboration or alignment with one another. When separated into these disparate parts, these initiatives fail to understand Chinatown's core strengths and utterly fail to address its unique needs.

Cultural community land trusts like TCLT (and others, like Little Jamaica CLT) understand our communities holistically. Our lens—hyper-local and community-informed—combined with our understanding of planning and housing policy make us ideal partners in co-creating protective policies that envision a real future for Chinatown. We do not want recognition plaques or platitudes. We want actions today that will enable a thriving Chinatown (the sum and the parts) for years to come.

**Specifically we ask that the Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative explicitly include the following amendments:**

- 1) Designate West Chinatown as a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) immediately, with dedicated, long-term public funding for legacy businesses, tenants, community infrastructure, and collectively-stewarded space
- 2) Launch a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study and/or implement a rigorous Cultural Districts program that protects Chinatown's full cultural fabric- including clan associations, community institutions, locally-serving businesses, and built and intangible heritage.
- 3) Adopt a Secondary Plan with strong, enforceable anti-displacement measures
- 4) Deliver meaningful cultural redress, alongside permanent public investment in housing and community infrastructure that reflects Chinatown's needs.

Without these concrete measures, the planning framework will fail the very community it claims to support.

The Chinatown Tomorrow Planning Initiative is a first step, but it is not the goal or the deliverable. The deliverable is a thriving Chinatown without displacement—one that continues



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to be a home for working class, multilingual Asian immigrant communities, businesses and residents.

For myself (Kai), as a child, going to Chinatown was an important weekly event—an opportunity to spend time at my grandparents' home on Sullivan Street, and to access culturally relevant groceries, services and entertainment. The intangible cultural history of Chinatown is something I hope my own child will continue to have access to—now and into the future.

For this reason, we urge you to act. Without action today, there will be no Chinatown tomorrow.

Best,

Kai Wong and Sara Constant,  
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors,  
Toronto Chinatown Land Trust